



## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

# Labor Market Support



Solidarity Center

*USAID funded a tripartite study tour to Ireland that looked at the Irish experiences in the area of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), with a particular emphasis on conciliation and mediation. The visit encompassed meetings with key stakeholders and institutions involved in the ADR process in Ireland, including the Irish Trade Union Congress, Employers' Association of Ireland, Labor Relations Commission, and the Labor Court. Study trip participants included two legal experts from the Croatian Employers' Association, two trade union representatives, legal experts Mihajlo Dika and Zeljko Potocnjak, and two Government participants.*

**Implementer:** American Center for International Labor Solidarity (Solidarity Center)

**Partners:** Croatian trade union confederations (SSSH, NHS, Matica, HUS, URSH); independent unions; Government Office for Social Partnership (OSP)

**Project completed December 2003**

Croatian trade union confederations represent 68% of the labor force in Croatia. In that capacity, they exert significant influence on all issues related to economic and social reform in Croatia. USAID provided trade unions with assistance in developing institutional capacity for constructive and informed participation in political and social reform processes, and support to their efforts in overcoming the fragmentation of the trade union movement. USAID supported included educational programs that facilitated their support and participation in Croatia's transition process to a market economy, and fostered their role as agents of democracy. Program activities included education that promoted and strengthened collaboration of trade unions with employers and government at all levels, collaboration between trade union organizations themselves on particular issues, sector-based education on economic trends and developments, pension reform, privatization, participation in the political process, internal democratization of trade union organizations, and others.

**Results** Over 100 trainers (trained through a train-the-trainer program) conducted over 1800 presentations on pension reform. Over 55,000 participants obtained necessary information on the pension reform process and workers received responses from relevant institutions on more than 8000 questions they raised.

With USAID assistance over 40 trainers were trained on collective bargaining and a series of bargaining seminars were conducted for a tripartite audience and local Economic and Social Councils (GSVs). A collective bargaining manual was drafted by a tripartite working group that will be used by social partners. In 2001 USAID activities provided labor unions with the tools to introduce transparent procedures in deliberations and decision-making as well as in mediation of labor conflicts and other alternative dispute resolutions. As a result, trade unions have become earnest supporters of social dialogue in Croatia. They participated in all GSV initiatives and testified their commitment to dialogue by preserving social peace in very difficult circumstances.

Women and youth are better represented in union decision-making bodies and were included in collective bargaining issues. The International Trade Union Women's School, educated more than 200 women activists on collective bargaining. More than 30 perspective leaders from the ranks of women and youth were supported through educational programs.